

# PROCEDURAL JUSTICE PROJECT



The Office of Early Intervention Services is actively involved in a Procedural Justice Project funded by a Justice Assistance Grant. Procedural Justice (PJ) refers to the fair processes and fair treatment people receive when they are subject to the decision-making of others. A growing body of evidence justifies the attempt to apply PJ practices to the juvenile justice system. Research shows that PJ perceptions lead to increased *satisfaction* and *compliance* among adults involved in the judicial system. PJ has also been shown to help people internalize legal rules, self-regulate their behavior, and have an impact on *recidivism*. PJ may be considered an evidence-based practice that addresses the “how” of juvenile justice programming and can be implemented with any specific program intervention (the “what”).

Procedural Justice has four elements:

1. *Respect*: Was the youth treated with dignity and as a valued member of society?
2. *Neutrality*: Was the youth afforded a level playing field, with decisions about his or her case made in an impartial and objective manner?
3. *Participation (Voice)*: Was the youth given an active voice in the decision-making process, allowing the youth to “feel heard” by those with decision-making authority?
4. *Trustworthiness*: Does the JJS employee appear to have the proper motives, reputation, and character to be in decision-making authority over the youth?

The Procedural Justice Project started at Salt Lake Early Intervention in January 2012 and is currently being implemented at Davis Area Youth Center and Lightning Peak. After one year of the project, the following accomplishments have been achieved:

- *Data Collection*: measures to track the impact of PJ interventions, youth and parent exit surveys, and staff PJ perceptions of their program, JJS and individual managers.
- *Training*: a series of trainings for managers and staff that focus on specific skills for applying PJ with youth, co-workers and line staff.
- *Research*: a study of fairness among youth at Salt Lake Early Intervention.
- *Best Practices*: a developing list of interventions and activities to apply PJ into JJS programming.

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- *Employee Performance*: a PJ goal has been added into the performance plans for all staff at Salt Lake Early Intervention.

The Office of Early Intervention Services is committed to implementing evidence-based practices and improving the quality of services we provide to youth and families. This Procedural Justice Project is one step in enhancing our employees' skills and directly related to improving the morale of JJS youths and employees.